

primary care jobs: nurse practitioners, physician assistants? I hear no talk about that.

The President. Well, I think you make a reasonable point that if you're going to change this health care system over time, then, to be very specific, the amount of person power that goes into billing, administration, all the things that we hate about the health care system—even though those are wonderful people who are doing great work—they're over time, hopefully, going to be moving into the actually providing care side of the health care industry, as opposed to the bean-counting side of the health care industry.

Keep in mind, though, that this is—our goal here is to over time change the system, over time reduce costs, over time transition those folks into the health care side of it. We already mentioned that we still have a nurse shortage out there. We still have a shortage of people who are providing primary care. People who are already in the health care system, I think, naturally would gravitate towards that.

And the last point I would make is we've got an aging population, so we know that health care is still going to be a growth industry. And that's not an entirely bad thing. As societies get older, we spend a certain larger portion of our overall income on health care, and that's okay. We just don't want to spend it badly and in a way that bankrupts the entire economy, and that's why we need the changes that I've discussed.

Mr. Gibson. Mr. President, I want to thank you for joining us this evening, both for the earlier hour and for this half-hour of "Nightline." As we mentioned at the beginning, I think this is a topic that is going to be discussed in every living room, over every kitchen table—not only

in the Congress, but mostly in the living rooms and in the kitchens of America. And that probably is where the decisions overall will be made: Can we support this? Are we for this? Are we certain that we'll have the care we need? And are we certain that this country can pay for it at a time when we don't have a lot of money.

The President. The answers are "yes" to all of that, and if the American people get behind this, this is going to happen.

Mr. Gibson. All right, Mr. President, I thank you for being with us. Thanks very much.

The President. Thank you so much. I've enjoyed it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:01 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Diane Sawyer, anchor, ABC's "Good Morning America"; Charles Gibson, anchor, ABC's "World News with Charles Gibson"; Orrin Devinsky, professor of neurology, neurosurgery, and psychiatry, New York University Medical School; John Corboy, professor of neurology, University of Colorado Health Sciences Center; Christopher D. Bean, material specialist, Allint Techsystems, Inc.; David Hattenfield, senior pastor, Cornerstone Baptist Church in Cumberland, MD; and Sen. John McCain, 2008 Republican Presidential candidate. Mr. Gibson referred to John Sheils, senior vice president, The Lewin Group. Ms. Sawyer referred to Gail R. Wilensky, former Administrator, Health Care Financing Administration; and Marisa L. Milton, vice president for health care policy and government relations, HR Policy Association. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 25. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the audio was incomplete.

Remarks at a United We Serve Event June 25, 2009

Hello, everybody. Thank you. Thank you. Well, first of all, it is great to see all of you here today. I want to thank all the Members of Congress who are here participating, all the families and young people who are here. I, obviously,

have to thank my wife, Michelle Obama, who has spent much of her adult life focused on service. You know, she understands that nothing's more powerful than when you enlist the skill and talent and passion of the American people

on behalf of helping others. And she's been doing that all her life, and she's doing just a great job as First Lady in making that happen.

I want to thank all the men and women here at Fort McNair and all those who serve our country under our proud flag. We're grateful to each and every one of you. Those Americans in uniform, it's clear the nature of their service. I think sometimes what's forgotten is when one person in the family serves in our Armed Forces, that means the entire family is serving. And it's very gratifying to see all of you committed to helping to put together some backpacks and care packages for military families all across the country. This is an issue that Michelle has taken extraordinary interest in during the course of our campaign. She would meet with military families and discover that, despite all the things that Government may want to do, there are still a lot of holes and a lot of gaps that need to be filled in terms of giving the support to our military families that's necessary, and that's where you come in.

So we're very proud of them, but we're very proud of you. And we always want to remember that serving our country is not just something that we should expect our members of our Armed Forces to do, that's something that we should expect all of us as citizens to do.

On Monday, we launched "United We Serve," our summer service initiative. It's going to run all the way through our National Day of Service on September 11th. We want to ask every American to take some time out this summer to do something for others. Parents take your kids. They're going to have fun, they're going to be in sports camps, they're going to be watching TV and playing video games—once a week, take them down, whether it's to a soup kitchen or to volunteer on a community project, teach them what it means to be a real citizen. You'll find that, actually, the kids love it, and it's going to make a lasting impression on them. And if all of us are doing

that this summer, then we're going to make this country stronger. We're working hard and Members of Congress are working really hard right now, to make our Government work for people, but Government can only do so much. Ultimately, the strength of America doesn't come from Capitol Hill, it doesn't come from the White House, it comes from the grass-roots, and that's what all of you are about.

So I appreciate you. I hope you guys have some great fun today. I notice the air conditioning is on in here, which—[laughter]—sometimes, with some of these service projects, you got to change shirts at the end of the day. So enjoy yourselves, and I hope I get a chance to say thank you personally and shake some hands before the day is done. All right? Thank you very much, everybody.

Oh, one other thing that I wanted to mention—and since we've got a lot of press here—sometimes people want to be involved in service but don't know how to get involved in service.

And so what I want to do is just remind people, if you go to serve.gov—serve.gov—that will give you an entire toolkit for how you can sign up for service in your communities. So there's no excuses. And you can find the service project that's right for you. If you care about animals, you can find a shelter that helps with stray animals. If you care about tutoring kids or you've got an education background, you'll be able to find something that allows you to use your particular skills.

So get on serve.gov, and that's how you're going to be identify—going to be able to identify the service project that's right for you and your family. All right? Thank you, everybody. Have fun.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:14 a.m. at Fort Lesley J. McNair. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady.